

**EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE JUVENILE
FIRESETTER PROGRAM OF THE PROVIDENCE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

BY: David D. Costa
Providence Fire Department
Providence, RI

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Abstract

In an effort to combat the juvenile firesetting problem in Providence, an intervention program was established through the Providence Anti-Arson Coalition. As the program evolved, the Providence Fire Department became solely responsible for juvenile firesetter intervention.

The Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program (JFIP) has seen several changes. Unfortunately, these changes were not driven by research and development, rather the changes were due to personnel turnover from promotions, injuries, or retirements.

The problem that prompted this research is that the Providence Fire Department has not consistently maintained the juvenile firesetter coordinator position. As a result, concerns have been raised regarding the delivery of services.

The purpose of this research project was to evaluate the effectiveness of the JFIP. Evaluative research was the method utilized for this project to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of the juvenile firesetting problem in the City of Providence?
2. Are there nationally recognized models for juvenile firesetter intervention programs?
3. What are the various components of the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program utilized by the Providence Fire Department?
4. How effective is the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program utilized by the Providence Fire Department?

The recommendations included that the Fire Department maintain the position of juvenile firesetter coordinator who should be responsible for education of juvenile firesetters. Also, the Fire Department should conduct fire safety education in public schools and develop an awareness campaign for the general public that emphasizes solutions for juvenile firesetting.

All participating agencies in the JFIP need to solidify and expand the network that is in place, identify additional resources, and draft formal agreements between each agency. Cross training should be provided to allow understanding of the roles each agency will fulfill.

A coalition of the participating members should develop procedures for supervision, case reviews, evaluation and formal follow up and the Providence Fire Department should immediately purchase a computerized records management system. In addition, the Fire Department should immediately start development of a Standard Operating Procedure (S.O.P.) that outlines the steps to follow whenever a juvenile firesetter is identified.

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Introduction

October 22, 1996, two juveniles ignited a fire in an abandoned mill in Providence, Rhode Island that nearly destroyed a whole neighborhood (Rowland, et al., 1996). A two year old boy was tragically killed on Manton Avenue in Providence, Rhode Island on February 21, 1996, when one of his siblings started a fire in a second floor bedroom (Dykas, 1996). A repeat of that tragedy occurred one year later when an Oxford Street boy perished from a fire started by his sibling in a Providence neighborhood (Rowland, 1997).

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reported that in 1994, for the first time ever, juvenile firesetters accounted for a majority (55%) of those arrested for arson, compared to 49% in 1993 and approximately 40% over the last 15 years (Appy, 1997). The 1996 Uniform Crime Report that was issued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) indicated that juvenile firesetters continued to account for a majority (53%) of all persons arrested for arson in the United States (FBI, 1996). Another revealing statistic was that fire is the number one cause of death in the home for children age five and under, and children playing with fire was the leading cause of fire deaths among preschoolers, accounting for more than one third of their fire deaths (Appy, 1997).

For many years, the Providence Fire Department has recognized the escalating incidents of juvenile firesetting and juvenile fire play nationwide and within the City of Providence (J. Richardson, telephone interview, January 26, 1998). In an effort to combat the juvenile firesetting problem in Providence, an intervention program was established in 1984 through a joint effort with the Providence Anti-Arson Coalition.

As the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program (JFIP) evolved, the Providence Fire Department eventually became solely responsible for juvenile firesetter intervention, and its Rules and Regulations were amended as follows to reflect the change:

The Fire Prevention Bureau shall engage in and perform all inspections and investigations which are necessary to secure the enforcement of any law, ordinance, regulation or order pertaining to the protection and preservation of life and property from fire or other disaster. The Fire Prevention Bureau shall also provide public fire education programs and a juvenile firesetter intervention program (Providence Fire Department Rules and Regulations, 1997, p. 3-1).

Since its inception, the juvenile firesetter program in Providence has seen several changes. Unfortunately, these changes were not driven by research or concerns about implementing the latest techniques in firesetter intervention. Rather, the changes were due to personnel turnover resulting from promotions, injuries, retirements, or lack of funding (J. Richardson, telephone interview, January 26, 1998).

The problem that prompted this research was that the Providence Fire Department has not consistently maintained the juvenile firesetter coordinator position (Costa, 1996). As a result, concerns have been raised regarding the delivery of services to the youth and families of the City of Providence as new personnel were assigned the duties of the Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator (MMA, 1997).

The purpose of this research project was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program within the Providence Fire Department. Evaluative research was the method utilized for this project to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of the juvenile firesetting problem in the City of Providence?
2. Are there nationally recognized models for juvenile firesetter intervention programs?
3. What are the various components of the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program utilized by the Providence Fire Department?
4. How effective is the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program utilized by the Providence Fire Department?

Background and Significance

In 1984, the first JFIP was officially established in the City of Providence (J. Richardson, telephone interview, January 26, 1998). During its infancy, the JFIP was administered by the Providence Anti-Arson Coalition, a not for profit, community based organization. The duties were transferred to the Commissioner of Public Safety's Office on October 17, 1988 (J. Richardson, telephone interview, January 26, 1998).

Joseph P. Richardson, a nationally recognized expert in the field of juvenile firesetter intervention, was chosen by the Commissioner of Public Safety as the coordinator for the JFIP. Richardson assembled a program manual that addressed issues ranging from consent forms and assessment instruments to juvenile firesetter profiles and teaching methods (J. Richardson, telephone interview, January 26, 1998). Richardson continued as program coordinator through March 25, 1992, when he took another position in city government and the fire department took on all responsibility for the JFIP.

Since that time, several firefighters have rotated through the position of Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator (Costa, 1996). With each change of personnel, there was a corresponding lapse in time when the coordinators position was left vacant. Costa (1996) noted that the lack of continuity with the coordinators position caused problems with continued, efficient and effective service to the community.

Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program Structure

The JFIP utilized by the Providence Fire Department is made up of three informal components or disciplines. The components are: screening, firefighter home visit, and psychological treatment (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). The screening and firefighter home visit is conducted by the Fire Department and the psychological treatment is referred to The Providence Center. There are no formal agreements between the various agencies.

The Providence Fire Department accepts referrals from parents or guardians, the Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF), mental health professionals, the Rhode Island Family Court, the Providence Police Department, the Providence School Department, and from fire and arson investigators (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). After receiving a referral, the juvenile firesetter coordinator interviews the parent or guardian of the juvenile, then obtains written permission to interview the juvenile and/or the juveniles teachers at school. If the child or family has a social worker, probation officer, or the juvenile is enrolled in a counseling program, permission is sought to exchange relevant information with the respective agencies.

The screening procedure categorizes the firesetter as either a curiosity, crisis, delinquent, or pathological firesetter (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). Curiosity firesetters receive one or two sessions of fire safety education. The sessions usually take place in the child's home so parents can be instructed on how to make their home fire safe. If the child attends school, a firefighter will also make a fire safety presentation to the child's classroom.

The crisis and delinquent firesetter will receive one or two sessions of fire safety education and the case will be forwarded to the Providence Police Department for their review (G. Lanzi, personal interview, February 9, 1998). The Police Department will determine whether to file charges against the juvenile depending on motive or intent. Additionally, depending on the circumstances of the crisis or delinquent behavior, a referral may be made to either DCYF or a mental health service provider.

The last category is not addressed by the fire department (G. Lanzi, personal interview, February 9, 1998). Pathological firesetters are referred directly to the Youth Services Bureau of the Providence Police Department for prosecution.

As part of the overall strategy to reduce the incidence of juvenile firesetting, public fire safety education is provided to every kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classroom in the Providence School System (Costa, 1996). Additional

presentations are made in most nursery schools, Headstart Programs and at other juvenile related community events (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998).

This research project was conducted to fulfill the requirements of the Strategic Management of Change (SMOC) course at the National Fire Academy. The research directly relates to module two of the SMOC student manual, The Change Management Module (1996). The Providence Fire Department acquired the responsibility to provide intervention for juveniles targeted as actual or potential firesetters. Analysis of the problem, planning a response and implementation of the chosen strategies took place over the past 15 years. Unfortunately, the JFIP has not been institutionalized, which has led to the inconsistent delivery of services to the youth and families of the City of Providence (Costa, 1996). Institutionalization of the JFIP would insure consistent services that could dramatically lower the chances of a juvenile firesetter going undetected and untreated (J. Richardson, telephone interview, January 26, 1998).

Literature Review

In 1994, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), through its' United States Fire Administration (USFA), estimated that approximately 40% of all arson fires were set by juveniles. In addition, FEMA (1994a), noted that studies have shown that the majority of normal children possess an interest in fire and nearly half have engaged in fireplay. Although the majority of the child set fires are the result of curiosity not malice, the economic and human costs are devastating and real.

To combat the serious juvenile firesetting problem nationwide, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the USFA contracted with the Institute for Social Analysis to conduct the National Juvenile Firesetter/Arson Control and Prevention Program (NJF/ACPP). The initiative was designed to assess, develop, test, and disseminate information about promising approaches to control or prevent juvenile firesetting and arson (FEMA, 1994a).

FEMA (1994c), reported that the NJF/ACPP defined seven components that are common to effective juvenile firesetter programs. The seven components are program management, screening and evaluation, intervention services, referrals, publicity and outreach, monitoring, and the juvenile justice system. The NJF/ACPP urges developers of juvenile firesetter programs to use all seven components in some form, although they encourage flexibility to tailor each program to meet local political and environmental conditions.

The recommendations of the Institute for Social Analysis (FEMA, 1994c), for the development of juvenile firesetter programs were as follows: (a) take advantage of materials developed for the NJF/ACPP over the past few years; (b) build on existing resources for firesetters in the community and design the program to local conditions; (c) start the program small and grow incrementally; (d) develop a juvenile firesetter capability rather than a single program. Consider the entire continuum of services from fire safety education to court controls for the arsonist; and (e) develop appropriate educational materials and techniques for juveniles and for referral agencies.

The work of the Institute for Social Analysis, the NJF/ACPP and FEMA influenced this research by highlighting the need to promote a network of agencies to respond to the problem of juvenile firesetting. A highly structured network including the fire department, school system, social services, juvenile justice and mental health should reduce the number of juvenile firesetters that go untreated.

"Far more children who set fires are detected by local fire department officials than by mental health professionals" (Kolko, 1988, p. 973). Many fire departments have responded by spearheading community based intervention programs. A large number of the juvenile firesetter programs rely on one of two approaches that are noteworthy because of their national scope (Kolko, 1988).

The first approach was developed by FEMA. Three program manuals were produced that provided screening and assessment instruments as well as guidelines for

treatment of three categories of juvenile firesetters (FEMA, 1994a). The second approach by the National Firehawks Foundation incorporated the assessment interview and classification methods developed by FEMA, along with providing fire safety education, processing referrals to mental health agencies and teaming up firesetters with firefighters who serve as role models (Gayner, McLaughlin, & Hatcher, 1984).

Kolko (1988) compared 16 programs that used the intervention approach designed by FEMA, to 13 programs utilizing the approach of the National Firehawks Foundation. Kolko noted that although both approaches appear to be appropriate for intervention with firesetters of various ages and firesetting risk, only a few studies have offered sufficient detail to be useful for mental health practitioners who treat juvenile firesetters.

Kolko found that both the FEMA and the National Firehawks programs encountered numerous factors that impact on the effectiveness of the intervention. These factors include single parenthood, limitations on the child's school achievements, lack of motivation to participate in the intervention program, lack of specialized training for therapists, and the level of involvement by mental health professionals in treatment and feedback.

Saunders and Awad (1991), supported Kolko's finding when their research of 13 female adolescent firesetters revealed severe family and individual pathology, in all 13 cases, had created several obstacles to the intervention process.

In 1996, Kolko summarized his 1988 research by stating;

The findings suggested the importance of teaching fire safety skills, making psychosocial intervention available, assessing child and family variables associated with firesetting, basing interventions on conceptual models and empirical supported procedures, and conducting a formal follow-up to assess outcome and evaluate its predictors (p. 416).

Kolko also conducted additional research that may have been the first controlled comparison study of juvenile firesetter intervention. Children were randomly assigned to receive either fire safety education or psychosocial treatment. Other cases that could not or would not consent to be randomized were treated with a brief home visit by a firefighter. The two intensive programs were first compared to each other and then were compared to the less intensive firefighter home visit.

For Kolko's study, the fire safety education program consisted of eight modules that increase a child's knowledge of fire science and appropriate roles and reaction to a fire emergency. The psychosocial treatment used cognitive-behavioral procedures to change the firesetting behavior and the firefighter home visit was a two session fire safety discussion that outlines the dangers of fire, firefighters duties, a promise not to play with fire again, and provided fire safety program materials for the family. Initial analyses showed,

Weekly child and parent reports documenting the child's progress during psychosocial or fire safety education found that most children reported no involvement with (64%) or exposure to (57%) fire, and noted no child or family problems (61%). Initial t-tests revealed significant reductions in child reports of fire involvement in psychosocial treatment versus fire safety education children, and reductions in parent-reported fire involvement for both groups ($p < .05-.01$) (Kolko, 1996, pp. 427-428).

Kolko determined that additional study is needed to evaluate other features of the treatments.

Specifically, it would be important to investigate the following topics to enhance the scope and impact of intervention: (a) the relative benefits of comprehensive (multimodal) interventions that combine various approaches, such as fire safety and psychological counseling; (b) the benefit of interventions that are longer in duration or more intensive; (c) the use of other paraprofessional groups to

conduct assessment and intervention procedures; (d) the application of specialized audiovisual materials (e.g., films) as cost-effective alternatives to treatment; and (e) the development of treatment procedures for very young children or for children with a significant attraction to fire (1996, pp. 428-429).

The works of Kolko influenced this research by providing confirmation that there are nationally recognized juvenile firesetter programs in various stages of use and development. These programs can serve as a benchmark to evaluate and improve the current juvenile firesetter intervention program used by the Providence Fire Department. Kolko, Saunders and Awad also emphasized the significance of insuring mental health services are available as part of the intervention process. The key to an effective intervention program will be to find the correct balance between fire safety education and psychosocial treatment.

A 1995 report from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Juvenile Firesetter Practitioners' Forum strongly agreed that the juvenile firesetting problem demands cross-disciplinary communication, training, and solutions. The forum focused on coalition building and cross-disciplinary training. The discussions exposed the fact that no major organization in North America has merged the various disciplines involved in juvenile firesetter intervention. Although the USFA initiated, developed, and supported juvenile firesetter training and programs, it could not meet the needs of all professional disciplines involved (NFPA, 1995).

The NFPA is currently reviewing a proposal to include standards for firesetter assessors in NFPA 1035, Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Fire and Life Safety Educator (NFPA, 1998). The proposal described firesetter assessor duties as reviewing case files, contacting a firesetter's family, conducting interviews, determining educational needs, implementing educational intervention, and determining and implementing referrals throughout an interagency network. In addition, the proposal

supplied guidelines for training and evaluation of individuals before they are chosen to work with firesetters and calls for the use of tested and validated screening instruments.

The NFPA influenced this research by supporting the need for a community based intervention program. The multi-disciplinary functions of an effective juvenile firesetter intervention program make it impossible for one agency to fund and supply all the required expertise. In addition, NFPA highlighted the need to provide proper training for firesetter assessors, as well as validated assessment and treatment for juvenile firesetters.

Procedures

The procedures used to prepare this project began with an internet literature search that included the Learning Resource Center at the National Emergency Training Center in January of 1998. Additional literature was reviewed at the Providence Public Library in Providence, Rhode Island, reference materials within the Providence Fire Department, and the author's personal library.

Telephone interviews were conducted with Joseph P. Richardson. Richardson is the Deputy Director of the Department of Communications in the City of Providence and he is a nationally certified school psychologist that holds a bachelors degree in both education and psychology, and a masters degree in psychology. He also has a Certificate in Advanced Graduate Study in educational psychology. The interviews were conducted on January 26, 1998, and May 22, 1998, to determine background information on the Providence Fire Department JFIP and to get advice on resources to develop and modify the current program.

A personal interview was conducted with Frank Hogan of the Lowell Fire Department in Lowell, Massachusetts. Hogan holds the rank of lieutenant and is a 30 year veteran of the fire service. Hogan coordinated the implementation of the juvenile firesetter program in the City of Lowell in 1992. The interview was conducted on

February 2, 1998 to acquire insight in the developmental stages of a juvenile firesetter program.

A personal interview was conducted with Guy Lanzi on February 9, 1998. Lanzi is the senior fire investigator for the Providence Fire Department's Arson Prevention Unit. Lanzi has over 10 years experience investigating fires. He provided background information regarding the intervention program used by the Providence Fire Department.

A personal interview was conducted with Guido Laorenza. Laorenza is a Captain in the Providence Police Department and is in charge of the Youth Services Bureau. The interview was conducted on February 10, 1998, to determine procedures for filing charges against a juvenile in the Rhode Island Family Court.

A personal communication was send to Doctor David J. Kolko via e-mail on February 22, 1998 and a response was received on February 23, 1998. The communications were to discuss follow up questions regarding Kolko's 1996 study that compared skills training programs with standard fire department practices. Kolko is an Associate Professor of Child Psychiatry and Psychology in the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. He is also the Director of the Child and Parent Behavior Clinic that serves children and their families in the Pittsburgh area. Kolko specifically focuses on the assessment and treatment of child antisocial behavior and conduct disorder, child firesetting, child physical abuse, and family violence.

A personal interview was conducted with Vernon Dunlap on March 13, 1998. Dunlap is the Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator for the Providence Fire Department and he is a 10 year veteran of the fire service. Dunlap provided information regarding the current intervention program used by the Providence Fire Department.

This researcher attended a juvenile firesetter intervention seminar on March 24 and 30, 1998, at the Holiday Inn in Warwick, Rhode Island. The seminar was sponsored by the Rhode Island State Fire Marshal. Information was presented by

Joseph P. Richardson and Irene Pinsonneault concerning the latest research on juvenile firesetters and training was provided on interviewing, screening and assessment of juvenile firesetters.

Pinsonneault is a partner in F.I.R.E. Solutions, Incorporated, which is a consortium of mental health; education; and criminal justice professionals who actively work in juvenile firesetter intervention programs in the northeast.

A personal interview was conducted with Richard Hughes on February 20, 1998. Hughes is a Captain with the Providence Fire Department and is assigned as the Chief Dispatcher for the Providence Department of Communications. Hughes provided information regarding the number of responses in 1996 and 1997 to grass, rubbish, trash and other nuisance type fires that are typical of juvenile firesetters.

A personal communication, via e-mail, was send to the Learning Resource Center at the National Emergency Training Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland, on April 23, 1998 and an e-mail response from Andrew Giglio was received on April 24, 1998. The communications were regarding the time frame for the review of the juvenile firesetter program manuals produced by FEMA.

Two meetings were held, one at Providence Fire Department Headquarters and the other at The Providence Center, to identify flaws in the network of agencies that provide services to the JFIP in Providence, Rhode Island. The meetings took place on April 30, 1998 and May 28, 1998. The following persons that were in attendance, provided information for this research project: (a) Edward O'Donnell, Chief of Child Protective Services at DCYF; (b) Beverly Poirier of The Providence Center; (c) Joseph F. Clifford III, representing Juvenile Probation and Parole at DCYF; (d) David Heden, the Chief Intake Supervisor at the Rhode Island Family Court; and (e) Guy Lanzi, senior fire investigator for the Providence Fire Department's Arson Prevention Unit.

A survey was distributed and collected on May 28, 1998, to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the JFIP. The size of the sampling was 10 representatives

of the Providence JFIP network, that included the Providence Police Department, Fire Department, School Department, Special Education Department, the Red Cross, the Family Court, Juvenile Probation and Parole, Child Protective Services, Social Services, and The Providence Center (a mental health representative).

Data that was obtained from the Providence Police Department regarding juveniles arrested for arson was entered into a computerized spreadsheet. Additionally, Providence Fire Department data showing the number of referrals to the JFIP was entered into the same computerized spreadsheet. Then, graphs were created and overlaid to determine if any patterns were developed.

Historical and descriptive research was employed to describe the past and present services provided by the JFIP. Evaluative research was utilized to determine the effectiveness of the service provided by the JFIP to the youth and families of the City of Providence.

Limitations

The results of this research were limited by the accuracy of statistics provided by both the Providence Fire and Police Departments. Although the Police Department had computerized records, the Fire Department records were a series of log books and journals. The Fire Department only kept records of structure fires and vehicle fires. There was no data to determine the number of grass, brush, rubbish, dumpster, or any other outdoor fires prior to 1996 because those fires were not tracked or investigated unless a witness came forward to identify a suspect.

The Providence Department of Communications computerized their dispatch center in October, 1995. The Department of Communications supplied the data to determine the number of outdoor fires in 1996 and 1997, but that data is limited by the accuracy of dispatcher entries and the validity of the information given to the dispatcher receiving the initial call for service.

The survey instrument was limited by the size of the sample. The small sample was used because of time constraints. However, there was at least one representative from each agency that participates in the JFIP. The results were useful for gauging the effectiveness of the JFIP network by measuring criteria as outlined by FEMA (FEMA, 1994c). The survey gave a baseline that can be used for future evaluation.

Definitions

ASSESSMENT: Evaluation of the psychosocial and environmental features related to firesetting behavior (FEMA, 1994b).

PSYCHOSOCIAL COUNSELING: Combination of the psychological counseling and social work.

SCREENING: Evaluation of the firesetting risk of an individual and the motives and circumstances surrounding the most recent firesetting incident (FEMA, 1994b).

Results

Answers to Research Questions

Question 1. What is the extent of the juvenile firesetting problem in the City of Providence?

Table 1 displays the number of juveniles referred to the JFIP between 1988 and 1997. The data in table 1 was compiled from the Providence Fire Department's annual reports. The average number of juveniles referred to the JFIP each year was 44.6 with the highest number (75) in 1989 and the lowest (10) in 1996.

Table 1

Referrals to the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program 1988-1997

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of referrals</u>
1988	21
1989	75
1990	74
*1991	74 (Estimate)
1992	11
1993	40
1994	58
1995	60
1996	10
1997	<u>23</u>
Total	446
Average	44.6

* Estimate by Joseph Richardson, JFIP Coordinator in 1991.

Table 2 reports the number of juveniles arrested for arson offenses between 1988 and 1997 (Providence Police Department UCR Reporting System, 1988-1997). The average number of juveniles arrested for arson each year was 7.6 with the highest number (16) in 1995 and the lowest (2) in 1989.

Table 2

Juvenile Arson Arrests by the Providence Police Department 1988-1997

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of arrests</u>
1988	6
1989	2
1990	6
1991	5
1992	9
1993	8
1994	9
1995	16
1996	9
1997	<u>6</u>
Total	76
Average	7.6

Table 3 displays the number of nuisance fires during 1996 and 1997 that took place just prior to or just after school hours. The average number of nuisance fires was 69.5 each year with the highest number (74) in 1997 and the lowest (65) in 1996.

Table 3

* Nuisance Fires Prior to and After School Hours 1996-1997

<u>Year</u>	<u>Fires</u>
1996	65
1997	<u>74</u>
Total	139
Average	69.5

*** Nuisance fires include rubbish, trash, brush, grass, dumpsters, etc.**

The fires were between 0730 hours and 0900 hours, and between 1400 hours and 1530 hours on Monday through Friday during the school year.

Question 2. Are there any nationally recognized models for juvenile firesetter intervention programs?

The literature review disclosed that there are essentially two models for juvenile firesetter intervention programs (Kolko, 1988). The first approach was developed by FEMA. Three program manuals were produced that provided screening and assessment instruments as well as guidelines for treatment of three risk categories of juvenile firesetters (FEMA, 1994a). The three risk categories of juvenile firesetters was little concern, definite concern, and extreme concern.

Juveniles assessed as "little concern" would receive educational intervention. If the assessment targeted a child as "definite concern", a combination of psychological and educational intervention would be prescribed. The final category, "extreme concern", would steer a child towards psychological intervention.

The second approach developed by the National Firehawks Foundation incorporates the assessment interview and classification methods developed by FEMA,

along with providing fire safety education, processing referrals to mental health agencies and teaming up firesetters with firefighters who serve as role models (Gayner, McLaughlin, & Hatcher, 1984).

Question 3. What are the various components of the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program utilized by the Providence Fire Department?

Referrals to the Fire Department

The Providence Fire Department accepts referrals from many individuals and organizations (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). They include, but are not limited to: parents or guardians; DCYF; mental health professionals; Family Court; Youth Services Bureau of the Providence Police Department; Providence Schools; and the Providence fire investigators or Arson Prevention Unit. The majority of referrals originate from the Providence fire investigators or the Arson Prevention Unit.

Screening

After receiving a referral, the juvenile firesetter coordinator interviews the parent or guardian of the juvenile, then obtains written permission to interview the juvenile, and if appropriate, the juveniles teachers at school (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). If the parent or guardian indicates that the family has a social worker, probation officer, or the juvenile is enrolled in a counseling program, permission is sought to exchange relevant information with the respective agencies.

During the screening, a complete firesetting history is taken to determine the extent of the firesetting behavior (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). Additionally, a determination of motive is evaluated to established if there is criminal intent.

Intervention Plan

An intervention plan is developed based on one of four categories that the juvenile firesetter is placed into after the evaluation of the screening and interagency interviews (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). The four categories are curiosity, crisis, delinquent, or pathological firesetting.

The juveniles identified as curiosity firesetters receive one or two sessions of fire safety education (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). The sessions usually take place in the child's home so parents can be instructed on how to make their home fire safe. If the child attends school, a firefighter will also make a fire safety presentation to the child's classroom.

The crisis and delinquent firesetter will receive one or two sessions of fire safety education and the case will be forwarded to the Youth Services Bureau of the Providence Police Department for their review (G. Lanzi, personal interview, February 9, 1998). The Police department will make the determination whether to file charges against the juvenile depending on motive or intent. Additionally, depending on the circumstances of the crisis or delinquency, a referral will be made to either DCYF or a mental health service provider.

The last category, pathological firesetters, will be referred to the Youth Services Bureau of the Providence Police Department for prosecution (G. Lanzi, personal interview, February 9, 1998).

Two weaknesses identified by the current JFIP Coordinator was the lack of a psychological assessment prior to the development of the intervention strategy, and the inability of the coordinator to mandate participation in the JFIP (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998).

Referrals to DCYF

Under Rhode Island General Law, Title 40-11-3, (1956), all persons are required to report every suspected case of child abuse to DCYF. Whenever a juvenile

firesetter's environment or circumstances indicate a potential or real case of child abuse, a referral is made to DCYF (G. Lanzi, personal interview, February 9, 1998). Social workers at DCYF can assist in making improvements to a child's family environment which may be the root of the firesetting behavior (E. O'Donnell, personal communication, April 30, 1998).

Mental Health Service Provider

The Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator makes referrals to the Providence Center whenever a screening indicates a juvenile may benefit from a psychological assessment or treatment (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). The Providence Center provides psychosocial therapy and has two therapists that participated in the Rhode Island State Fire Marshal's Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Seminar given on March 24 and March 30, 1998. The Providence Center accepts payments from several health insurance providers and provides services for families that can not afford to pay (B. Poirier, personal communication, April 30, 1998).

Referrals made by the Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator to a mental health provider are informal. The parent or guardian is responsible to set up appointments and follow through with the therapy (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). Referrals made by the Family Court are mandatory and enforceable by the Court (G. Laorenza, personal interview, February 10, 1998).

Juvenile Justice

In the State of Rhode Island, Family Court has jurisdiction of all wayward (misdemeanor) and delinquency (felony) offenses committed by juveniles from the age of reason (technically seven years old) until age 21 (Bucci & Brazil, 1996). The purpose of the Family Court is:

To secure for each child under its jurisdiction such care, guidance and control, preferably in his own home, as will serve the child's welfare and best interests of the state; to conserve and strengthen the child's family ties wherever possible, removing him

from the custody of his parents only when his welfare or the safety and protection of the public cannot be adequately safeguarded with such removal; and, when such child is removed from his own family, to secure for him custody, care and discipline as nearly as possible equivalent to that which should have been given by his parents (Bucci & Brazil, 1996, p. 4).

When a juvenile seven years of age or older is identified as a firesetter, the Youth Services Bureau of the Providence Police Department decides if the juvenile has committed a wayward or delinquent offense (G. Laorenza, personal interview, February 10, 1998). If the offense is wayward, the juvenile is referred to the juvenile hearing board, that is made up of volunteers and community people. The juvenile hearing board, "...serves as an alternative to Family Court for first and second time juvenile offenders... In most cases, the youths sent to the boards have committed misdemeanor offenses such as shoplifting, vandalism, underage drinking or petty arson" (Sabar, A., 1998, p. B5). The typical punishment prescribed by the juvenile hearing board would include some form of community service, restitution, and possibly some form of counseling (G. Laorenza, personal interview, February 10, 1998).

When a juvenile commits a delinquent offense, a petition is filed in the Family Court's Intake/Diversion Unit (Bucci & Brazil, 1996). The petition may be filed on either a non-emergency or emergency basis. Bucci and Brazil explain that a case can be handled informally if the "respondent" (defendant) admits responsibility for the charge and agrees to pay restitution, does community service and/or goes to counseling. Processing the petition in this manner would keep the offense from becoming part of the juveniles record. If the "respondent" does not agree with the terms, the juvenile would be processed for arraignment.

If a petition is filed in Family Court on an emergency basis, the State's attorney will probably request that the juvenile be remanded to the Training School (a correctional/detention facility for juveniles) until a probable cause hearing (Bucci &

Brazil, 1996). "However, a Respondent held at the Training School must be afforded a trial within thirty (30) days of initial incarceration" (Bucci & Brazil, 1996, p. 13).

Family Court Judges do not like to hold children at the Training School if they are under nine years old (G. Laorenza, personal interview, February 10, 1998).

Laorenza also has observed that juveniles rarely go through to a full trial. Judges rely heavily on alternative sentencing that includes community service and counseling targeted to the specific offense.

Fire Safety Education

As part of the overall strategy to reduce the incidence of juvenile firesetting, public fire safety education is provided by the Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator and one additional firefighter to every kindergarten, first, second, and third grade classroom in the Providence School System (Costa, 1996). Additionally, presentations are made in most nursery schools, Headstart Programs, and at other juvenile related community events (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998).

Question 4. How effective is the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program utilized by the Providence Fire Department?

FEMA, (1994c), reported that the NJF/ACPP defined seven components that are common to effective juvenile firesetter programs. The seven components are program management, screening and evaluation, intervention services, referrals, publicity and outreach, monitoring, and the juvenile justice system. The survey asked the respondents to rate from 0 to 5, the effectiveness of each of the seven Providence Fire Department JFIP components. The highest possible score for any one component was 50.

Table 4 displays the results of the survey. The order of ranking from highest to lowest for all the JFIP components was referrals (20); program management (19); intervention services (14); a tie between screening and evaluation (13), monitoring (13), and the juvenile justice system (13), and publicity and outreach (10) had the lowest

ranking. The survey also exposed that within each program component, several respondents had no knowledge of its effectiveness. The relatively low ratings of all components indicated that overall, the JFIP is less than effective.

Table 4

Rating of the Effectiveness of the JFIP

<u>Survey No.</u>	<u>Item 1</u>	<u>Item 2</u>	<u>Item 3</u>	<u>Item 4</u>	<u>Item 5</u>	<u>Item 6</u>	<u>Item 7</u>
1	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk
2	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk
3	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk	unk
4	4	unk	unk	4	unk	unk	unk
5	3	3	3	3	2	3	3
6	3	2	unk	3	unk	unk	unk
7	5	3	5	5	1	1	unk
8	1	2	3	1	1	3	3
9	3	3	3	4	3	3	4
10	unk	unk	unk	unk	3	3	3
Total	19	13	14	20	10	13	13
Average	1.9	1.3	1.4	2.0	1.0	1.3	1.3

Note. Item 1 = program management; Item2 = screening and evaluation; Item 3 = intervention services; Item 4 = referrals; Item 5 = publicity and outreach; Item 6 = monitoring; Item 7 = juvenile justice system; unk = unknown.

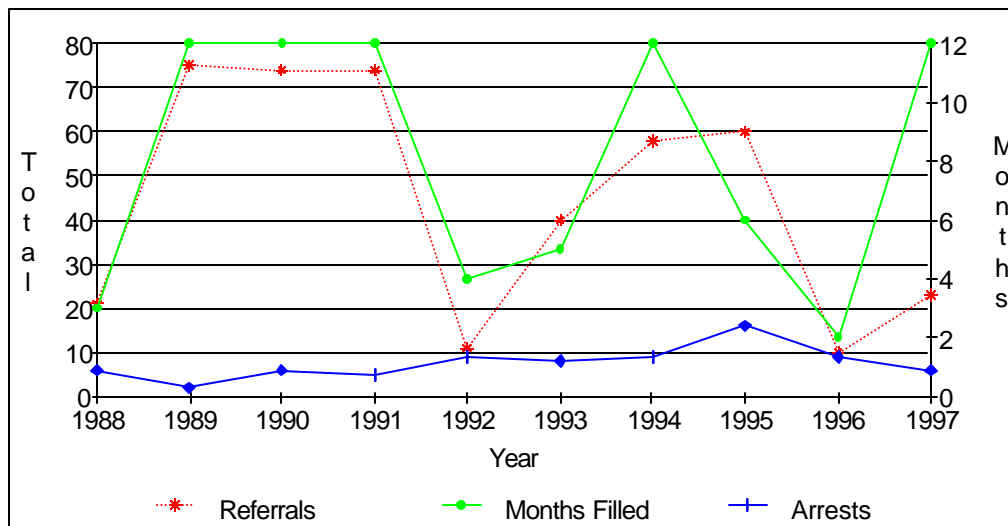


Figure 1. Number of referrals to the Providence Fire Department JFIP, number of months the JFIP Coordinator position was filled, and the number of arrests of juveniles for arson by the Providence Police Department during 1988 to 1997.

Figure 1 shows that in 1994 there was a rapid increase in the number of referrals. The referrals remained high until 1995, when the JFIP Coordinator position became vacant (Costa, 1996). The JFIP Coordinator position remained unfilled for another year until being filled by the present JFIP Coordinator (Providence Fire Department, General Order No. 68, 1996). Figure 1 shows an increase in the number of referrals for 1997 that correlates with the position being filled again for the entire year.

Discussion

The problem that prompted this research is that the Providence Fire Department has not consistently maintained the juvenile firesetter coordinator position (Costa, 1996). The purpose of this research project was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Providence Fire Department JFIP in comparison to other programs. Although there are currently no national standards to follow, there are juvenile firesetter programs with a national scope that have proven results. This research revealed numerous intervention programs that can provide guidance and strategies for improving the JFIP in the Providence Fire Department.

What is the extent of the juvenile firesetter problem in the City of Providence? This question must be answered before embarking on a major commitment of resources to develop or expand a comprehensive JFIP.

When looking back at Table 1 and Table 2, the average number of referrals to the JFIP was 44.6 juveniles and on average there was 7.6 juveniles arrested each year over the last 10 years. With numbers sustained at these high levels, it is apparent that the juvenile firesetting problem requires the fire department's attention and resources.

While analyzing the data relating to juvenile firesetting, an area of concern was revealed that needs further investigation. The Providence Fire Department's incident reporting system is not computerized and does not sort the approximately 37,000 responses made each year (MMA, 1997). Additionally, only structure and vehicle fires are investigated, unless a witness comes forward providing sufficient information to proceed with an investigation (G. Lanzi, personal communication, February 9, 1998).

Although the Fire Department can not, as a practical matter, sort its data, data from the Providence Department of Communications (see Table 3) showed that in 1996 and 1997, 139 responses were dispatched for rubbish, grass or similar fires just prior to the start of school or immediately after school was released (R. Hughes, personal communication, February 20, 1998).

A substantial number of brush, rubbish, dumpster, and grass fires that are started immediately before or after school, should be attributed to juveniles (F. Hogan, personal interview, February 2, 1998). Taking Hogan's statement at face value, it appears that the juvenile firesetter problem in Providence may be somewhat larger than what is reflected by the statistics in Table 1 and Table 2.

The strengths of the Providence Fire Department's JFIP include that the screening process, referral mechanism, and juvenile justice components are currently in place (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). Another strength was the enthusiasm and expertise of the participants in the meetings of the JFIP network on April 30, 1998, and May 28, 1998 (G. Lanzi, personal communication, April 30, 1998). Solutions to many of the programs weaknesses were identified by the agency representatives in attendance.

The list of weaknesses of the Providence Fire Department's JFIP begins with the program management. The failure of the Providence Fire Department to maintain the Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator position on a regular basis has raised concerns regarding the delivery of services (MMA, 1997).

When the Commissioner of Public Safety took on responsibility for the JFIP in October 1988 (J. Richardson, telephone interview, January 26, 1998), the referrals climbed rapidly through 1989, followed by high levels of referrals in 1990 and 1991. After a drop of referrals in 1992, referrals began to rise rapidly in 1993, followed by additional growth in 1994, and 1995. Then, 1996 showed a sharp decrease, followed by a slight increase in referrals for 1997. When discounting slight variations from one year to the next, Figure 1 displays that during the same period, arrests of juveniles for arson were climbing slightly until they peaked in 1995. Then arrests dropped off in both 1996 and further in 1997.

What caused the dramatic fluctuation in the number of referrals, and what may be a new downward trend in juvenile arrests? Figure 1 shows a correlation between

the JFIP Coordinator position being vacant and a drop in referrals. In both 1992 and 1996, the position of Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator was left vacant for the majority of those years (G. Lanzi, personal interview, February 9, 1998).

"The number and range of referrals to the programs from outside agencies and the effectiveness of referrals to these agencies depends largely on how the program is established and how strong the links between the program and the agencies are" (FEMA, 1994b, p. 9). It would be reasonable to conclude that as the network of agencies realized that the Providence Fire Department had no resources for intervention, referrals would drop as they sought help elsewhere. In contrast, following three year spans with the same individual running the Providence JFIP (G. Lanzi, personal interview, February 9, 1998), 1991 and 1995 recorded the highest number of referrals and arrests of juvenile firesetters.

All networks are built on the reliability and competence of the individual participants. The Providence JFIP is only as good as it's weakest link, and the lack of maintaining the coordinator position has continually caused a breakdown in the JFIP network. Referring to Figure 1, the latest breakdown left the coordinators position vacant for 16 months during 1995 and 1996. It appears that by leaving the position open for 16 months, the loss of continuity of the JFIP network may have been responsible for a downward trend in arrests of juveniles for arson. With the breakdown in communications of the JFIP network, information from referrals that might aid in fire investigations may not have been passed along to arson investigators or the police department.

"Programs need support from the highest level in the fire service" (FEMA, 1994b, p. 13). Contracts should be drafted between all agencies providing services to the JFIP that outline roles and responsibilities (I. Pinsonneault, JFIP seminar, March 30, 1998). Part of those responsibilities should include continuation of services. Programs

that rely on one person tend to fail once that person leaves the program (J. Richardson, JFIP seminar, March 30, 1998).

Between 1988 and 1991, the Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator for the Providence Fire Department was qualified to conduct a wide range of assessment and intervention strategies (J. Richardson, telephone interview, January 26, 1998). As a certified school psychologist that received training in fire investigations, Richardson conducted initial screenings, psychological assessments, fire safety education and psychosocial counseling. The expertise of the coordinator helped to centralize the management and intervention provided by the program.

Since 1991, the Providence Fire Department has relied on firefighters to perform the duties of the Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator. As the responsibility of the coordinator was transferred to firefighters, the firefighters needed to establish a larger network of agencies in order to provide the expertise for intervention of juvenile firesetters.

Table 4 illustrated that several survey respondents did not know the effectiveness of many of the JFIP components. This lack of knowledge indicates a breakdown in communications of the JFIP network agencies. Although each member agency may be effective within their own expertise, each agency needs an awareness of the functions of all the JFIP components. Increased communication and possibly cross-training would insure the appropriate intervention plan was implemented for each individual firesetter.

Another weakness of the Providence Fire Department JFIP was the lack of a psychological assessment prior to the development of the intervention strategy (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). An informal referral would be made to the Providence Center whenever the JFIP Coordinator decided that psychological therapy may benefit the juvenile.

Other intervention services were not being utilized to their full extent. The JFIP Coordinator expressed concern that there is no mechanism to mandate participation in the JFIP (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). Although the JFIP Coordinator may lack specific authority to mandate participation in the JFIP, the Family Court and DCYF, may be able to provide the leverage needed (D. Heden, personal communication, April 30, 1998).

One more weakness was the lack of psychological counseling services for juvenile firesetters (B. Poirier, personal communication, April 30, 1998). The Providence Center only has a few counselors with a firesetting background and there is a waiting list for all counseling services.

Publicity and outreach was identified as another weakness of the JFIP (G. Lanzi, personal communication, April 30, 1998). Lanzi highlighted a recent incident that involved a juvenile starting a fire in a building. During his investigation, Lanzi received information showing that the juvenile had prior incidents of firesetting behaviors that had gone unreported by the Providence School Department.

The final weakness was the lack of monitoring, which has led to the inconsistent delivery of services provided by the JFIP (G. Lanzi, personal interview, April 30, 1998). The lack of monitoring and oversight has contributed to the breakdown in communications of the JFIP network.

The Institute for Social Analysis' survey of juvenile firesetter programs nationwide revealed that 87% were administered by the fire service (FEMA, 1994b). The primary reason why the fire service administered the firesetter programs was the belief that the fire service has the capacity to identify large numbers of firesetters. "Indeed, the majority of juvenile firesetter referrals to existing programs are from within the fire service, usually followed by parents and then schools and mental health organizations" (FEMA, 1994b, p. 11).

Although most would agree that the fire service should be the lead agency for identification of juvenile firesetters, no singular agency has the resources to provide a versatile intervention program that can respond to every case of juvenile firesetting. Juvenile firesetting is a community problem and it should be responded to by the whole community (I. Pinsonneault, JFIP seminar, March 24, 1998).

Both juvenile firesetter intervention programs that have a national scope, the FEMA model and the National Firehawks Foundation model, utilize the same assessment interview to classify juvenile firesetters risk of setting additional fires (Kolko, 1988). The three classifications are "little concern", "definite concern", and "extreme concern". Prescribed treatment for a juvenile classified as "little concern" is educational intervention; "definite concern" would receive psychological and educational intervention; "extreme concern" would receive psychological intervention (FEMA, 1988).

Pinsonneault and Richardson (JFIP seminar, March 30, 1998) expressed concerns regarding the screening and assessment tools supplied by FEMA because they classify curiosity firesetters as "little concern". Statistics show that some of the most costly fires in terms of lives and property are started by curious kids (J. Richardson, JFIP seminar, March 30, 1998). Because the FEMA model prescribes educational intervention for those labeled as "little concern", psychological treatment is not provided. All juvenile firesetters should receive a psychological assessment and be enrolled in a mandatory, multi-session program that would allow the fire safety educator time to form an opinion as to the full range of treatment required for the juvenile (I. Pinsonneault, JFIP seminar, March 30, 1998).

The apparent shortcomings of the FEMA interview forms has led to a review that is currently proceeding (J. Richardson, JFIP seminar, March 30, 1998). The new juvenile firesetter manuals should be available through FEMA in early fall of 1998 (A. Giglio, personal communication, April 24, 1998).

The current JFIP utilized by the Providence Fire Department basically consists of a firefighter home visit, with informal referrals made to other agencies. Kolko (1996), evaluated the effectiveness of the firefighter home visit. If the analyses hold up to a reliability check, the firefighter home visit was no less effective than fire safety education or psychosocial treatment. However, Kolko's home visit was somewhat different than the usual practice of most fire departments in that it included two sessions; was formally monitored for integrity and evaluated with data; had specially trained firefighters; and was preceded by a formal psychological assessment (D. Kolko, personal communication, February 23, 1998). These elements may have improved the impact of the home visit.

The NFPA is currently reviewing a proposal to amend NFPA 1035, Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Fire and Life Safety Educator (NFPA, 1998). One of the proposed amendments calls for the use of tested and validated screening instruments when assessing juvenile firesetters (NFPA, 1998). A specific recommendation was made to encourage the United States Fire Administration (USFA) to include valid and up to date forms in their juvenile firesetter program materials (NFPA, 1995). The recommendation suggested that a large number of juvenile firesetter programs are operating using screening instruments that are not scientifically validated. That concern would apply to the Providence JFIP.

Kolko reviewed some of the more recent field trials of the FEMA handbooks prepared by the Institute for Social Analysis and based on the Juvenile Firesetter/ Arson Prevention and Control legislation.

I was impressed by the effort to get this going, but not by the outcome. The difficulty is that few programs actually describe the clinical or fire education materials they use, and the order in which the intervention unfolds. In general, I don't think the FEMA and Firehawks programs are sufficiently contemporary, diverse, or well evaluated (D. Kolko, personal communication, February 23, 1998).

Although FEMA's guidelines for implementing a juvenile firesetter program specifically calls for a system for monitoring and evaluation (FEMA, 1994b), it is apparent that those elements have been overlooked by a large segment of the fire service.

At the NFPA's Juvenile Firesetter Practitioners Forum, Paul Schwartzman, stated, "We know a lot about juvenile firesetting. Our knowledge isn't perfect, but we know enough to implement programs" (NFPA, 1995, p. 5). The best model programs are ones that include good assessments, various clinical and fire specific components, an evaluation, formal follow up, and continued supervision and case reviews (D. Kolko, personal communication, February 23, 1998).

A shortcoming of the current model programs is the lack of direction in the specific blend of fire safety education and psychosocial treatment. When intervention strategies include fire safety education, it is twice as likely to produce results (I. Pinsonneault, JFIP seminar, March 30, 1998). Kolko's research found that recidivism rates declined with either fire safety education or psychosocial treatment, although psychosocial treatment was the most effective in reducing the frequency of subsequent firesetting incidents (D. Kolko, personal communication, February 23, 1998). Kolko also stated that he integrates fire safety education and psychosocial treatment with all his juvenile firesetting patients. Additional research will have to be conducted to determine the optimal balance of the available intervention strategies.

The Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator has had difficulties with clients that do not keep appointments that have been scheduled for the JFIP (V. Dunlap, personal interview, March 13, 1998). In order to operate an effective JFIP, participation of targeted juveniles must be mandatory (F. Hogan, personal interview, February 2, 1998).

Although the Providence Fire Department can not mandate participation in their JFIP, several other agencies may be able to supply the needed leverage. Creating a

multi-jurisdictional approach as outlined by FEMA (1994b), would be the key to solving this dilemma.

A juvenile firesetter, age seven or older, could be referred to either the Rhode Island Family Court or the juvenile hearing board, if the offense is considered a misdemeanor (G. Laorenza, personal interview, February 10, 1998). The juvenile hearing board, "...serves as an alternative to Family Court for first and second time juvenile offenders... In most cases, the youths sent to the boards have committed misdemeanor offenses such as shoplifting, vandalism, underage drinking or petty arson" (Sabar, A., 1998, p. B5). Either the Family Court or the juvenile hearing board has the authority to mandate participation in the JFIP.

For children under age seven, a referral can be made to DCYF (D. Heden, personal communication, April 30, 1998). If a juvenile firesetter is in danger of hurting himself or others in the family, DCYF can investigate and provide services to rectify the problem (E. O'Donnell, personal communication, April 30, 1998). DCYF can use the Family Court system to mandate participation in the JFIP.

Another avenue that should be explored is the possibility of creating legislation that would mandate participation in a JFIP whenever a juvenile is identified as a firesetter. The State of Massachusetts has implemented a law that requires any juvenile with a firesetting history to be evaluated to determine the risk of additional firesetting incidents before placement by the Department of Social Services (F. Hogan, personal interview, February 2, 1998). The Massachusetts statute should be a model that Rhode Island lawmakers could use as a guideline for mandating participation in a JFIP.

The key to enhancing the current JFIP in the Providence Fire Department is to develop and nurture relationships with all cross-jurisdictional agencies. The relationships should open up new ideas and resources that have been untapped up to this point. As the entire community starts to attack the problem of juvenile firesetting, the risks to the community should drop dramatically in the future.

Recommendations

The results of this research indicate that the risks imposed to the City of Providence from juvenile firesetters is sizable and warrants the commitment of substantial fire department resources to provide the fire safety education portion of the JFIP. The Providence Fire Department should maintain the position of Juvenile Firesetter Coordinator and expand education for targeted juvenile firesetters from the firefighter home visit to a structured fire safety education program. In addition, fire safety education in the public schools should continue and an awareness campaign for the general public should be conducted that emphasizes the problems and solutions for juvenile firesetting.

A crucial step should be to solidify and expand the informal network that is already in place for the JFIP. Several meetings should be scheduled to identify additional resources, roles and responsibilities of each agency and to develop solutions to the weaknesses identified in the current JFIP. Specifically, resources for psychological assessments need to be identified to insure an integrated intervention plan is developed for each juvenile firesetter.

Training for all participating agencies in the JFIP is needed. Specifically, the fire department needs to train multiple firefighters to eliminate the recurrent lapse in services provided by the JFIP when the coordinator is promoted, transferred, or leaves the fire service. Also, cross training should be provided with all agencies to allow a better understanding of the roles each agency is responsible to carry out.

A major flaw that has been identified in many of the JFIP's throughout the United States is the lack of data to validate the effectiveness of the program. A Providence coalition that includes all participating members should be formed to develop procedures for supervision, case reviews, evaluation and formal follow up. Periodic review of the program should be conducted to identify problem areas that may develop from time to time.

The Providence coalition should appoint a subcommittee to investigate the feasibility of passing legislation to make participation in a JFIP mandatory for all juveniles identified as a firesetter.

The Providence Fire Department should immediately purchase a computerized records management system. The ability to record and track every activity of the fire department is critical to the development of fire prevention programs. Computerization will give the City of Providence the ability to identify patterns of firesetters that otherwise would go undetected.

The final recommendation is that the Providence Fire Department should immediately start development of a Standard Operating Procedure (S.O.P.) that outlines the steps to follow whenever a juvenile firesetter is identified. Input from all participating JFIP agencies should be considered before the final S.O.P. is implemented.

These recommendations should institutionalized the JFIP within the Providence Fire Department and throughout the City of Providence. As the JFIP fully develops, the safety of the community should increase substantially as the risks imposed by juvenile firesetters are reduced dramatically.

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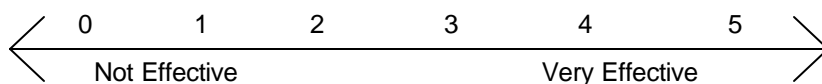
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Appendix

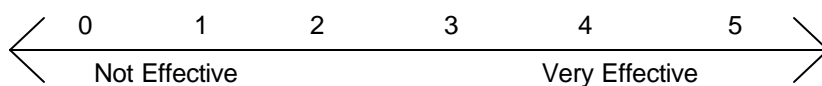
Please rate the effectiveness of the various components of the Providence Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program. Circle from "0" (Not Effective) to "5" (Very Effective).

1. Program Management



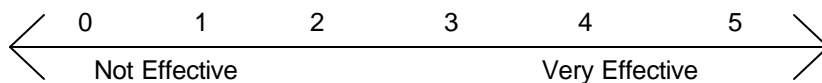
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2. Screening and Evaluation



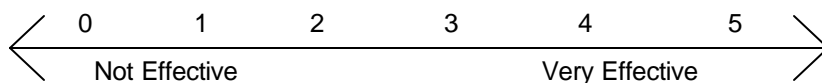
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3. Intervention Services



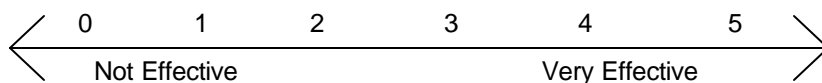
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4. Referrals



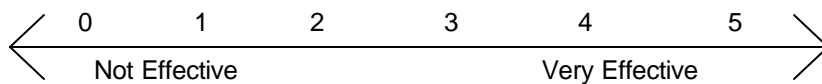
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5. Publicity and outreach



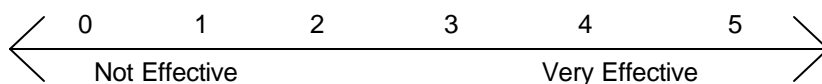
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6. Monitoring



Unknown

7. Juvenile Justice System



Unknown

*** Please feel free to write any comments you may have on the back of this form.**